SEAN MURPHY WITH MATT HOLLINGSWORTH

BATMAN™

CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT

BOOK ONE

DC BLACK LABEL

BATMAN
CURSE OF THE
WHITE KNIGHT
BOOK ONE

HAHAHA
HAHAHA

ARKHAM.

HAHAHA HA HA HA

DON'T FORCE MY HAND, GENERAL--***SURRENDER.*** LEAVE THIS VALLEY AND GIVE ME WHAT'S MINE.

ARE YOU REALLY SO WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?

whip!

AKK!

WHAT PRICE?

GOTHAM VALLEY IS CURSED, ***LORD WAYNE.***

THERE ARE ***DEMONS*** IN THESE DARKENED FORESTS--ANCIENT ONES THAT SEEP FROM THESE MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS AND FLOW THROUGH THE VILLAGE AT NIGHT.

NO ONE IS SAFE--THEY'LL TURN YOU INTO A MONSTER ***LIKE THE REST OF US.***

SORRY, ***LAFFY...***

...I DON'T BELIEVE IN CURSES.

SHUNK

HSSSSSS!

AAARRRGGHHH!!!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

ARKHAM MANOR, 1685.

Sean Murphy: Script, Art, Covers
Matt Hollingsworth: Colors & Cover Colors
AndWorld Design: Letters

BATMAN
CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT

BOOK ONE

Batman created by Bob Kane with Bill Finger

ARKHAM ASYLUM, TODAY.

I SHUT OFF THE CAMERAS, BUT YOU NEED TO BE QUICK.

WE'RE ALL VERY INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER.

BOOP BOOP BEEP

OF COURSE YOU ARE.

HERE'S THE BAG YOU ASKED FOR. AND THE KEYS TO YOUR ***OLD CELL--***

YOU'RE COMING ***WITH ME.***

BUT--WHAT IF SOMEONE SEES ME?

YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS WANT WHAT I HAVE? THEN WE DO IT MY WAY. ***LIKE ALWAYS.***

WHERE IS EVERYONE?

WE HAD TO MOVE ALL THE INMATES SO WE COULD BEGIN RENOVATIONS. BRING THIS PLACE UP TO CODE.

BUT IT'S ***PERFECTLY CHARMING*** THE WAY IT IS!

IT'S ALL PART OF GOTHAM'S NEW ***NAPIER INITIATIVE.***

NAPIER?

THERE'S A BIG PUSH TO REINVENT THE CITY--FIX ALL THE PROBLEMS YOU UNCOVERED WHILE CAMPAIGNING FOR COUNCIL--

LET'S CLEAR THIS UP RIGHT NOW--THAT WAS ***JACK NAPIER,*** NOT ME!

TWO SEPARATE PEOPLE. GOT IT?

TOOK ME YEARS TO MAKE THIS CITY INTO THE CAPITAL OF CRIME. THEN NAPIER HIJACKS MY BODY AND MANAGES TO ***RUIN THE PARTY.***

TOOK ALL THE FUN OUT OF GOTHAM!

WHUD

WHAT IS IT YOU'RE GETTING?

I NEED SOMETHING FOR MY ***FINAL ACT!*** A PERFORMANCE BATMAN AND NAPIER WILL NEVER SEE COMING.

THIS IS THE CITY'S BIGGEST, DARKEST SECRET--THE BEGINNING AND END OF GOTHAM.

THE JOKE *ONLY I KNOW ABOUT.*

CAN I SEE IT?

NO TOUCHY!

I CAN'T SHOW YOU NOW--*THAT'LL RUIN THE PUNCH-LINE!*

HMM--WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I'M FORGETTING SOMETHING?

SNEAK TO THE CELL, GRAB MY STUFF...CHECK CHECK CHECK...

OH YEAH--MY OLD "DISAPPEARING PEN" TRICK!

IT'S GOING TO LOOK SUSPICIOUS IF I ESCAPE WITHOUT A TRACE. BETTER TO LEAVE SOME EVIDENCE OF A STRUGGLE.

ARRRRGH!!!

THOCK

IS THAT WHY YOU BROUGHT ME ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE--TO *STAB ME?*

WELL I COULDN'T STAB YOU EARLIER BECAUSE YOU WOULD'VE CALLED THE POLICE TOO SOON.

AND *I DON'T LIKE TO BE RUSHED!*

:GURGLE...: ACK!

AND DON'T SPILL ANY BLOOD IN HERE! YOU DON'T WANT BATMAN SNOOPING AROUND MY CELL AND RUINING MY SURPRISE!

THANKS, WARDEN!

Bruce,

I know you waited for as long as possible before reading this. Because you're too frightened to let me go, and because you don't know how to say good-bye.

Bruce

No doubt my death made you feel more alone than ever, causing you to retreat into that dark place where you think no one can find you. And you probably tried to push everyone away, convinced that only the isolation would give you the strength to return. But you were wrong. And that's always been hard for you to understand.

That there's no strength in being alone.

I'm happy you're finally reading this, because it means you now understand. It means Barbara and Richard are there with you, as I doubt you could have read this without them. It means you understand how their love is essential to moving forward.

But most importantly, it means you're ready to say good-bye. Good-bye, my son.

Alfred

P.S.: Check the loose floorboard in my quarters. There's something there you're ready to see.

"IT'S A BRAND-NEW CELL, WARDEN! HOW THE HELL DID JOKER ESCAPE BEFORE THE PAINT EVEN DRIED?"

I DON'T KNOW, JIM-- I WOULD HAVE ASKED HIM, BUT HE WAS TOO BUSY ***STABBING ME WITH A PEN.***

WHAT HAVE WE GOT?

NOT MUCH-- NO SIGN OF FORCED EXIT FROM THE CELL, AND NO EVIDENCE OTHER THAN A BLOODY PEN AND A HAZY EYEWITNESS.

SECURITY TAPES?

WARDEN SAYS A POWER SURGE KNOCKED OUT THE CAMERAS, BUT I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE.

THIS IS THE MOST SECURE FACILITY IN THE STATE, YET WE KEEP LOSING INMATES. AT WHAT POINT DO WE CONSIDER THAT THERE'S ***SOMETHING ELSE GOING ON HERE?***

YOU THINK THE WARDEN'S IN ON IT?

MAYBE JACK NAPIER WAS RIGHT ABOUT ARKHAM. ABOUT IT SECRETLY BEING CONTROLLED BY ***ELITES*** WHO ALLOW INMATES TO ESCAPE AND WREAK HAVOC ON GOTHAM.

AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A WILD CONSPIRACY THEORY NAPIER CREATED TO VILIFY THE DEPARTMENT. BUT WHAT IF HE WAS ONTO SOMETHING?

AND ONCE THE DAMAGE IS DONE, THEY BUY THE CHEAP REAL ESTATE AND PROFIT FROM THE ***BATMAN DEVASTATION FUND.***

HE LOOKS NERVOUS.

THINK YOU CAN GET SOMETHING OUT OF HIM BEFORE HE LAWYERS UP?

OF COURSE.

JOKER DOESN'T USUALLY MISS.

YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN.

YEAH? I DON'T FEEL *LUCKY.*

AND YOU WERE STABBED RIGHT HERE IN THIS HALLWAY?

YES.

WRONG.

WHAT?

AN ATTACK LIKE THAT CREATES *CAST-OFF PATTERNS* AND *SPATTER* ON THE WALL.

NOT A *CLEAN PUDDLE OF BLOOD* ON THE FLOOR.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

DO YOU WANT TO TELL US WHERE JOKER REALLY STABBED YOU, OR DO YOU JUST WANT US TO ARREST YOU FOR *HELPING HIM ESCAPE?*

I THINK I NEED MY--

WHERE'S THE JOKER?!

AHH...I DON'T KNOW! HE WENT TO HIS OLD CELL, THEN HE LEFT!

WAIT--I'M NOT SAYING ANYTHING UNTIL I SEE MY ATTORNEY!

TOO LATE.

NICE WORK.

WE MAY NEED TO SHUT DOWN THIS ENTIRE FACILITY.

IF YOUR THEORY IS TRUE, THEN THESE ***ELITES*** HAVE BEEN INFECTING ARKHAM FOR DECADES.

NAPIER ONCE MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT HIS OLD CELL. ABOUT "***DISCOVERING THE JOKER***" THERE...

...WHAT DO YOU THINK HE MEANT BY THAT?

BLOOD SPATTER.

FRESH MARKINGS ON THE WALL.

STAND BACK.

HOLY SHIT. SECRET PASSAGE?

MIGHT BE A TRAP.

AFTER YOU.

...THANKS.

I DON'T LIKE ENCLOSED SPACES.

LOOKS LIKE THE BOTTOM OF AN OLD WELL. BUT SEALED UP AT THE TOP.

JESUS CHRIST, THIS PLACE LOOKS ANCIENT.

WHAT'S ON THAT WALL?

BLOOD. SOME SORT OF MESSAGE...

...BUT SOMEONE ERASED IT.

THE GROUND'S BEEN DISTURBED. LOOKS LIKE JOKER WAS SIFTING THROUGH IT.

WHAT IS THAT?

I THINK IT'S A FEMUR.

THERE'S A BODY BURIED HERE.

P 11
22 10
21 9
20
19
18
17 5
16 4
15 3
14 2
13 1
STOP
EMERGENCY
ALARM
RIGHT ON TIME, RUTH.

I'VE GOT SOME-
THING BIG FOR YOU.
SOMETHING THAT'LL
REALLY BRING DOWN
THE HOUSE.

GET YOUR
GODDAMN
FEET OFF MY
MAHOGANY
DESK.

YOU REVEALED YOURSELF TO GORDON, AND NOW YOU WANT TO TELL EVERYONE ELSE IN GOTHAM?

GCPD

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?

NAPIER WAS RIGHT--THERE ARE TOO MANY ***UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES*** OF BATMAN.

WHAT ABOUT THE ***UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES*** OF SUDDENLY TELLING THEM THE TRUTH?

NOT JUST FOR YOU, BUT FOR THE ENTIRE WAYNE LEGACY?

YOU COULD COMPROMISE EVERYTHING YOUR FAMILY EVER WORKED FOR!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT GORDON SAID.

WELL HE'S RIGHT! IF YOU WANT TO LEGITIMIZE YOURSELF, THEN JOIN THE ***GTO.*** HELP US WITH THE ***NAPIER INITIATIVE.***

I'M SORRY, DICK. I CAN'T.

YOU WON'T JOIN BECAUSE IT HAS NAPIER'S NAME ON IT, RIGHT?

WELL, THAT'S BULLSHIT--***NAPIER*** WASN'T THE JOKER, HE WAS THE ***GOOD GUY!***

AND IF HE WAS THE GOOD GUY, WHAT DOES THAT MAKE ME?

THAT'S NOT WHAT I--

YOU WANT ME TO ADMIT IT, FINE--***NAPIER DID A LOT OF GOOD!*** HE EXPOSED THE CORRUPTION AND THE HYPOCRISY AND USHERED IN A NEW ERA FOR GOTHAM.

BUT HE ***TOOK ME DOWN*** IN ORDER TO DO IT!

I'M NOT MAD AT NAPIER, I'M MAD AT MYSELF--I HAD ***NO EXCUSE*** FOR GETTING IT WRONG!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

LOOK AROUND.

I HAD AN INFINITE AMOUNT OF WEALTH AND RESOURCES, AND I SPENT DECADES USING THEM TO PURSUE ONE ***SINGLE GOAL***--TO MAKE GOTHAM A BETTER PLACE.

IT WAS MY ONLY JOB, ***AND I FAILED!***

AND THE ONLY REASON I ***FINALLY*** SAW MY MISTAKES WAS BECAUSE MY GREATEST ENEMY ***RUBBED MY FACE IN THEM.***

THAT'S WHY I CAN'T JOIN THE GTO--BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG BATMAN HAS LEFT.

I'M SO SORRY. I WISH I HAD BETTER NEWS.

St. RAPHAEL VETERAN HOSPITA

BUT...I QUIT SMOKING YEARS AGO.

IT SAYS HERE YOU SERVED IN THE MILITARY. ANY EXPOSURE TO TACTICAL-USE CHEMICALS? LIKE NAPALM OR AGENT ORANGE--

I CAN'T TALK ABOUT THAT.

ANGELS

YOU CAN'T TALK BECAUSE IT'S CLASSIFIED, OR BECAUSE--

I CAN'T TALK ABOUT THAT.

I SEE.

WELL, GO AHEAD AND GET DRESSED.

I RECOMMEND STARTING CHEMO IMMEDIATELY. YOU SEEM LIKE A FIGHTER, SO I'M HOPING--

OH GOD NOT NOW...

HOLD ON, WE'RE NOT FINISHED--

SIR, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PUT SOME CLOTHES ON--

DON'T TOUCH ME!

JEAN-PAUL, ARE YOU OKAY?

MICHAEL--I FOUND HIM! HE'S ***HALLUCINATING AGAIN.***

CHAPEL

JP, WE'RE HERE!

DON'T TRY TO FIGHT IT--LET IT IN!

I...I CAN'T...

SOMEONE GO GET SECURITY.

MICHAEL, SHUT THAT GUY UP!

SHICK

CRASH

JP!

...GASP... ...GASP...

...OH JESUS CHRIST.

"JEAN-PAUL JEAN-PAUL JEAN-PAUL MICHAEL ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC"

"YOU KNOW WE WORRY ABOUT YOU, BRUCE."

I MEAN, YOU'RE IN THAT HOUSE ALL ALONE NOW.

I'M NOT SAYING YOU NEED TO TALK TO ME OR DICK, BUT YOU NEED TO TALK TO ***SOME-BODY.***

POLICE

GTO
GOTHAM TERRORIST OPPRESSION

IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, I'LL CALL LESLIE.

DON'T DO IT FOR ME, BRUCE. DO IT FOR YOURSELF.

CAN WE TALK ABOUT THE CASE NOW?

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT?

RESULTS CAME BACK ON THE BONES--THEY'RE OVER THREE-HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

THAT'S A LONG TIME TO BE BURIED IN ARKHAM ASYLUM.

IT WASN'T ALWAYS AN ASYLUM. IT USED TO BE ***FORT ARKHAM.***

BEFORE THAT, IT WAS JUST A STONE HOUSE BELONGING TO ***LAFAYETTE ARKHAM.***

LAFFY ARKHAM, THE VAMPIRE FROM THAT OLD ***CHILDREN'S POEM?***

EVERY KID IN GOTHAM KNEW IT...

LAFFY ARKHAM IN THE WOOD EATING CHILDREN WHEN HE COULD...

UNDERNEATH A MOON OF BLOOD, SWEPT AWAY BEFORE THE FLOOD.

DAD USED TO RECITE THE POEM ON HALLOWEEN TO SCARE THE SHIT OUT OF ME. HE THOUGHT IT WAS HILARIOUS.

ARKHAM WAS A BRITISH GENERAL WHO CONTROLLED GOTHAM VALLEY IN THE 1600s.

AND A VAMPIRE.

HEY, IT'S GOTHAM CITY--

--ALL KINDS OF WEIRD SHIT HAPPENS HERE!

SO HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS WAS HIM?

ARKHAM SUFFERED FROM ***CONSUMPTION,*** OR AS WE NOW CALL IT, ***TUBERCULOSIS.*** THE BONE MARROW SAMPLES TESTED POSITIVE.

LOTS OF PEOPLE HAD TUBERCULOSIS BACK THEN.

ARKHAM ALSO HAD A ***SPINAL HUMP.***

LOOK HOW THE VERTEBRAE CURVE BELOW THE SHOULDERS FROM THE ***ARTHRITIC INFLAMMATION.*** THIS IS DEFINITELY HIM.

WHAT ABOUT THE MEDALLION YOU FOUND NEAR THE BODY? AND WHAT DID THE BLOOD MESSAGE SAY?

I'M NOT SURE YET. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.

I FOUND THIS CHEST UNDER ALFRED'S BED-- THIS IS WHAT HE WAS REFERRING TO IN THE ***NOTE*** HE LEFT ME.

AND INSIDE WAS THE JOURNAL OF ***EDMOND WAYNE,*** THE FIRST WAYNE EVER TO COME TO GOTHAM.

Edmond Wayne

1685.

SAME AGE AS THESE BONES.

THAT'S...A *REALLY* BIZARRE COINCIDENCE.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

IT'S TOO BRITTLE TO OPEN AND READ--I'LL NEED TIME TO RESTORE IT.

THAT WASN'T THE ONLY THING IN THE CHEST. THERE WAS ALSO A WHIP...

...MADE FROM *BAT LEATHER.*

I DON'T KNOW WHAT JOKER HAS, BUT IT GOES ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE FOUNDING OF GOTHAM CITY.

AND SOMEHOW INVOLVES THE *WAYNES.*

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

I DON'T THINK THE PRAYERS ARE HELPING, FATHER.

BAD NEWS?

GAVE ME SIX MONTHS. WITH CHEMO, MAYBE A YEAR.

JEAN-PAUL. I'M SO SORRY.

IT'S OKAY.

YOU KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.

KEEPS ME FOCUSED. I'M HERE A LOT-- MIGHT AS WELL PITCH IN.

MAYBE IT'LL SCORE ME ***BONUS POINTS*** WITH THE MAN UPSTAIRS.

MAYBE HE'LL LOOK PAST ALL THE HORRIBLE SHIT I'VE DONE.

YOUR FAMILY HAS A LONG HISTORY WITH US, JEAN-PAUL. YOU KNOW IF YOU EVER NEED ANYTHING--

I KNOW.

SAFE NIGHT, JEAN-PAUL.

FLICK

...

FATHER, IS THAT YOU?

PUT THAT DOWN, JEAN-PAUL. YOU'RE NOT A JANITOR...

...YOU'RE A KING. THE RIGHTFUL HEIR TO GOTHAM.

THE WARS, THE SICKNESS, THE GHOSTS IN YOUR NIGHTMARES-- GOD HASN'T BEEN TORTURING YOU...

..HE'S BEEN PREPARING YOU.

...

THEY MURDERED YOUR ANCESTOR AND SEIZED YOUR LAND. AND FOR SEVEN GENERATIONS THEY'VE SAT ON YOUR THRONE.

...ARE... ARE YOU AN ANGEL?

YES. I'M HERE TO REVEAL YOUR HOLY DESTINY...

CLANG

...THE TRUTH BEHIND YOUR NAME, BEHIND THE VALLEY.

GOD NEEDS YOU, AZRAEL...

...HE NEEDS YOU TO TAKE THE FLAME SO YOU MAY BRING THE LIGHT.

TO CORRECT THE SIN THAT HAS SPREAD DARKNESS THROUGH YOUR KINGDOM.

BY SLAYING THE DEMON, THE MAN WHOSE FAMILY HAS CURSED GOTHAM...

...BRUCE WAYNE.

US ARMY

NEXT ISSUE:

Black-and-white art for BATMAN: CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT #2 by Sean Murphy

BATMAN: CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT 2.13

10 29 18

BATMAN: CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT - 2.15

Sean Murphy · 10.30.18

BATMAN: CURSE of the WHITE KNIGHT 2.17

• JEAN MORETH • 11/13

BATMAN: CURSE of the WHITE KNIGHT 2.19

Sean Murphy 11.7.18

AZRAEL

Written & illustrated by

SEAN MURPHY

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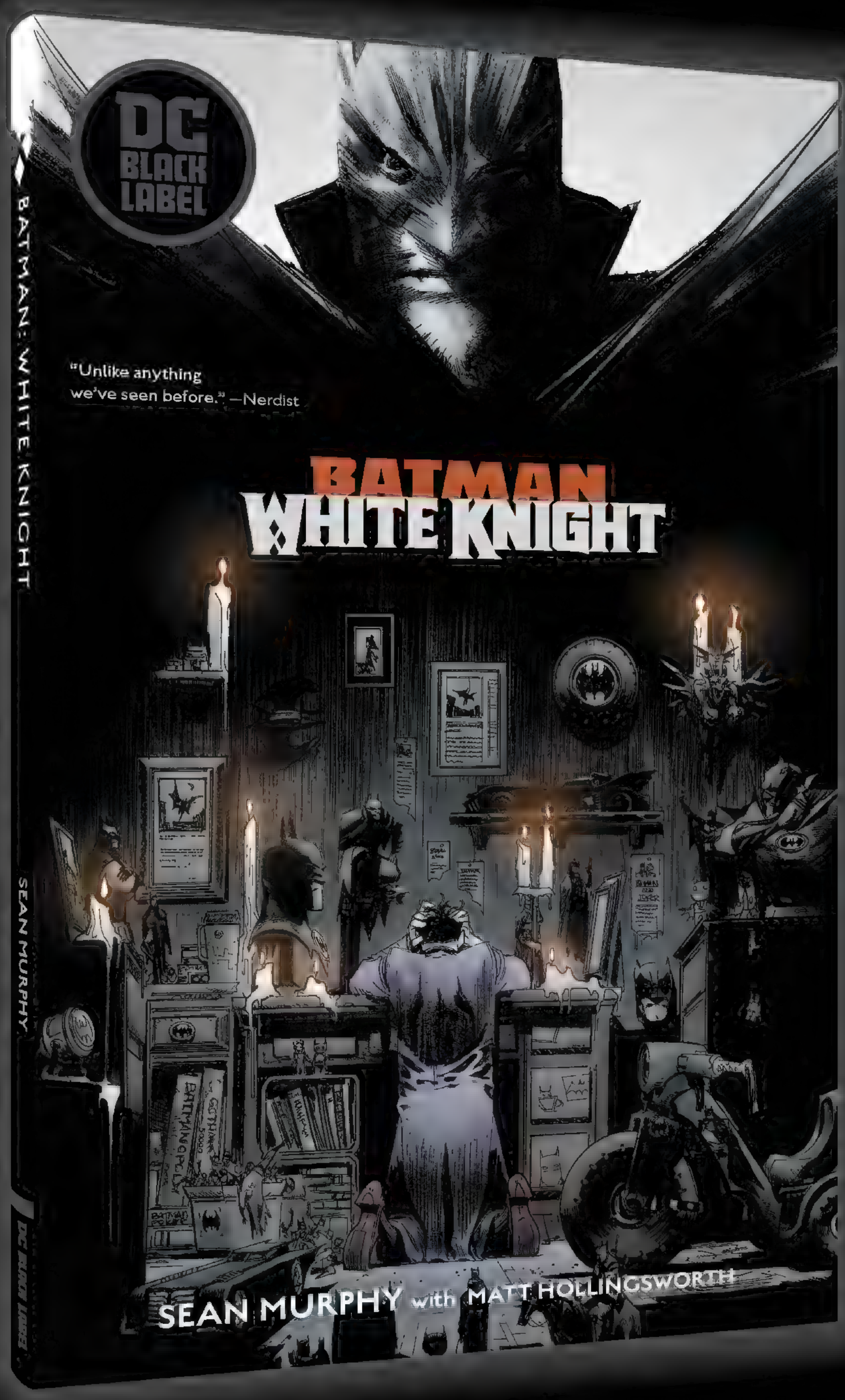

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A CURSE, A BIRTHRIGHT
AND CENTURIES OF LIES...

THE JOKER IS BACK WITH
A DEVASTATING SECRET
TO SHAKE BATMAN AND
GOTHAM TO THE CORE!

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